

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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63

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CPR-01 SY-02 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0464

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 4311

LIMDIS

FOR ARA ASSISTANT SECRETARY KUBISCH

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR BL

SUBJ: BANZER STATE VISIT

1. IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROGRAMMED STATE VISIT FOR PRESIDENT BANZER I HAVE BEEN RECEIVING FROM VARIOUS OFFICIALS OVERTURES OF CONCERN REGARDING THE PRESIDENT'S TRANSPORTATION FROM LA PAZ TO US PORT OF ENTRY WHERE, I UNDERSTAND, THE SCENARIO CALLS FOR HIM TO BE GIVEN JET TRANSPORTATION BY THE USG. THE WORRY IS HOW TO GET THE PRESIDENT, IN A DIGNIFIED AND SAFE MANNER, TO THE US PORT OF ENTRY AND RETURN. TODAY I AM PERSUADED BY THE LATEST SUCH REQUEST, COMING FROM THE MINISTER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY AND ON THE PRESIDENT'S DIRECT INSTRUCTION, TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH YOU.

2. AT THE PRESENT TIME PRESIDENT BANZER, AS YOU KNOW, IS ON A STATE VISIT TO VENEZUELA, COLOMBIA, ECUADOR AND PERU. HE LEFT HERE IN AN ANCIENT DC-6 WHICH HAD BEEN HASTILY ACQUIRED BY THE AIR FORCE FROM LAB AND REFURBISHED FOR THIS PURPOSE. I WAS ACTUALLY MUCH CONCERNED TO SEE THE PRESIDENT RISK HIMSELF IN THIS AIRCRAFT AND, INDEED, MECHANICAL DIFFICULTIES ALONG THE WAY CAUSED HIM TO BE FOUR OR FIVE HOURS LATE IN ARRIVING IN CARACAS. A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CRITICISM AROSE IN THE LOCAL PRESS ABOUT THIS.

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3. A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE DC-6 WOULD BE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO

TRAVEL TO MIAMI IN THE ONLY EXISTING BOLIVIAN JET, A 727 OWNED BY LAB

THIS, HOWEVER, WOULD THOROUGHLY CRIPPLE DOMESTIC AIR TRANSPORT DURING THE ABSENCE OF THE PLANE AND WOULD, OF COURSE, BE VERY COSTLY AS WELL. FOR THE PRESIDENT AND HIS ENTOURAGE TO RESERVE THE FIRST CLASS PORTION OF A COMMERCIAL FLIGHT MIGHT BE A POSSIBLE SOLUTION BUT THERE WOULD BE CLEAR SECURITY RISKS NOT ONLY FOR THE PRESIDENT BUT FOR THE OTHER PASSENGERS AS WELL.

4. I AM AWARE THAT STATE VISITS FOLLOW STRICT FORMATS AND THAT ANY DEVIATION CAN RAISE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. I DO RECOMMEND, HOWEVER, THAT THE DEPARTMENT AND WHITE HOUSE GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE DILEMMA WHICH FACES THE BOLIVIAN PRESIDENT, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT AS WELL THE VERY LIMITED RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY WHICH PRECLUDE THE CHARTERING OF ADEQUATE AIRCRAFT. I WOULD CERTAINLY NOT WANT TO SEE THE PRESIDENT RISK AGAIN A FLIGHT AS LONG AS FROM HERE TO MIAMI IN THE ANCIENT DC-6 WHICH HE IS NOW USING.
SIRACUSA

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